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PHL 501.01: Seminar - The Duty to Understand Science and Technology

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The Duty to Understand Science and Technology

(1) INTENT OF THE COURSE

The intent of the course is to provide students with an advanced understanding of the philosophy of science and the philosophy of technology and with empirically and philosophically informed answers to the questions: What do people know about science and technology? What can they know? What should they know?

(2) TEXTS

Heidegger, The Question Concerning Technology.

Lambert and Brittan, Introduction to the Philosophy of Science.

Moriarty, The Engineering Project.

We will spend roughly five weeks on each of these texts.

We will start with Heidegger's classic account of science and technology. We will read Lambert and Brittan to evaluate and elaborate Heidegger's view of science and Moriarty's book to evaluate and elaborate Heidegger's account of technology. I will refer to recent books and articles that report and discuss popular knowledge of science and technology as aids toward answering the three questions listed under **INTENT OF THE COURSE**.

(3) REQUIREMENTS

a. Classroom Participation (one third of course grade)

It will be your obligation to show through participation in the classroom discussion that you are keeping up with the reading assignments and are in command of the material presented in class. In particular, everyone is to take careful notes and, when called on, to present, on the basis of those notes, a ten-minute summary of the preceding session's main points. It will be my obligation to make everyone feel welcome and encouraged to participate.

b. In-Class Examinations (one third of course grade)

There will be three in-class examinations on February 23, March 28, and on the day of the final, Tuesday, May 10 at 10:10 am. Each exam will count for a ninth of the course grade and consist of four course content questions and one essay question on the course material of the preceding third of the semester.

c. Term Paper (one third of course grade)

Pick a particular issue of common knowledge, prejudice, or ignorance in the fields of science and technology, e.g., global warming, evolution, the distribution of prosperity, the machinery of the Internet, the structure of the economy, etc., and apply what we have learned about science and technology. I'll be glad to help with the formulation of a topic.

The paper should be about 12 pp. long (3000 words), double-spaced, paginated, paper-clipped, the notes at the end of the paper; no outline or bibliography. Follow any of the standard styles and formats.

Outline due: March 28

Paper due: April 27

(5) NOTE

Office Hours: MW 8:10-9:00 and by appointment.

Phone and messages: 243-2792

E-mail: Albert.Borgmann@umontana.edu

If you have a disability, please let me know so that we can provide accommodations.